

CITY OF WASHINGTON, THURSDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 24, 1853.

route than that pursued by the navies of Tarsheus, or the  
 fleets of Carthage, Phœnicia, Persia, and Egypt, or  
 among the ancient routes of this country. Constantinople  
 and Alexandria were among its more modern chan-  
 nels; and Bruges and Antwerp in the north, and Genoa  
 and Venice in the south, the means of spreading it to  
 Europe. The discovery of the continent of America in-  
 creased the search for a shorter route to the Pacific, a  
 passage which it obstructed to Asia; and from that day to  
 the present, skill and power have exerted themselves to get  
 round, through, or over this formidable obstacle. The  
 progress of the arts, and especially the discovery of the  
 existence of the North-west passage, has enabled the men of  
 this day and generation to accomplish the work.  
 This road will to a great extent supersede the present  
 long and dangerous commercial voyages round the Cape  
 of Horn and the Strait of Magellan, and will be useful  
 in conducting the commercial and business intercourse  
 between—

- 1st. The western States of the valley of the Missis-  
 sippi, and adjacent Oregon, and Eastern Asia.
- 2d. The Atlantic coast of North America, and a large  
 portion of the Pacific coast of South America.
- 3d. The north of Europe, and the Pacific coast of  
 North and South America.

I will now endeavour to illustrate with a detailed statement  
 of the statistics of the value of the trade of the States and  
 countries referred to, but may give such statement in a  
 report of my remarks hereafter. The simple announce-  
 ment of the names of the several countries interested

Mr. President, the most important event in the modern history of the world's progress was, I think, the exodus of that vanguard of Americans, principally from my native State, who, in the year 1843, planted themselves on the Pacific coast. Insignificant as this little band of pioneers appeared to be, consequences of vast magnitude have been produced by their westward movement, and greater are destined to flow from it: their possession and occupancy of the valley of the Columbia has opened the way to the settlement of the long-standing controversy with Great Britain and a recognition that we had *any rights upon the Pacific*. A foothold obtained in Oregon, and the possession of California became only a question of time. Mexican territory was rescued from the hands of the European nations, and her shedding of American blood upon American soil, precipitated that auriferous acquisition to our territorial limits many years perhaps in advance of the time at which it would have become ours by the same process that Texas did, and a progress certainly perfectly harmonious with the advancement of the human race, and intellectual superiority of our race. Already a bill has passed the House of Representatives dividing Oregon and creating a new Territory out of the northern portion of it, to be, and most appropriately, I think, called Washington Territory. In a few years an immense population will grow up on the Pacific slope of our continent, between which and China, and other parts of Asia, lines of ocean steamers will be established, and our citizens, possessing all the light of the present age, will fail to make a deep and permanent impression upon that country and people, the advantages of which will be reciprocal.

I beg not to be understood as saying that this bill is perfect. I know that it is not; and there are some amendments which, if proposed, will meet my hearty approval. I will not vote for it without the concurrence of a majority of the House, and for an express prohibition against the exercise, by the company who are to construct it, of anything in the shape of banking powers; none such as will enable them to issue currency, or to exercise currency guarded against. The means and the powers necessary carried forward the enterprise are all with which I wish to see the company clothed; indeed, if it were not for the success, economy, and speed with which the proposed companies are carried forward these railroad enterprises in our old States, I should decidedly prefer that the whole road should be made by the general government, and be exclusively under its management and control. I have no objection to the proposed extension of the Cumberland road, so long as it is administered against the latter plan. I admit that the construction of this road, like every internal improvement measure, whether of a general or local character, is fraught with difficulties. It is not, however, a measure of such magnitude as the history of these works, constantly imperil their fate. But this is only an argument for increased vigilance on the part of the legislator, and honesty and fidelity on the part of the public officers having charge of these works, in discharging their duty.

The arguments against this bill apply with much greater force against river and harbor appropriations. With these, besides their liability to abuse, is the very great difficulty of determining what they are entitled to. The former character, they are objects worthy of appropriations from the national treasury. Now, I ask if it is all probable, in the course of human events, there will ever come before Congress a bill for the improvement of a river, of such importance that it may be said to be for the benefit of our own citizens; and all those great incidental benefits everywhere imparted to the value of the soil by thoroughfares of this sort, the building up of the country, the opening of new sources of wealth, and the extremes of the world, will inure to the benefit of our own country and our own citizens. I do not believe that this government has the right to grant a charter for such a purpose, and I think it is a duty which it owes to the people, that it should provide that it shall have no effect within the borders of any State, unless such State shall by formal act assent thereto.

But the right of the United States to aid chartered corporations has been established by the action of Congress in their subscription to the Louisville and Portland, the Delaware and Chesapeake, the Potomac and Ohio, and the Dismal Swamp canals; and in the exercise of this right, our subscription in the present instance would be no exception as to dimensions and strength of the road, and the privilege to transport the mails and munitions of war free of charge.

I am aware that Pennsylvania, like other States of this Union, was at an early day predisposed to a canal system, and that it has made great improvements. I appreciate the vigilance which would induce my friends from that State [Messrs. BRODHEAD and COOPER] to guard against such abuses on the part of the government of the United States as might result from the adoption of a log-rolling system which undertook to provide every place in the State with a railroad or a canal, than in carrying on, if you please, through double improvements—canal and railroad—through and over the Allegheny mountains, the expense of which would doubtless require information beyond what we have here. But if your information be correct, such was the case. Would that senator [Mr. BRODHEAD] or his colleague, [Mr. COOPER], who so ably addressed the Senate a few minutes since in opposition to this measure, be willing to give up the advantages of the railroads in their descent, cuts, tunnelling and inclined planes, and resolve his State and people back again into the condition in which they were before these improvements were made? Do they not know that the same evils, the same abuses, the same log-rolling system may be, than a return to the pack-horse, and the stage coach! Although the construction of those great works may have saved Pennsylvania from ruin, yet she has done this at the cost of her credit with an enormous public debt arising from them more than counterbalancing the evils of that debt.

Mr. President, besides the intrinsic merit of this measure, and the deep interest felt in its success by those whom I in part represent, I commend it to your support because it is a fair, a fearless and a highly popular one. For these senators who have never failed to show my opposition to every western measure. Prominent among these is my worthy friend from Georgia, (Mr. DAWSON), whose smiling countenance and sonorous voice are always seen and heard upon the floor in opposition to all measures of the kind. (Mr. Dawson.) Yes. Our differences in this regard do not in the slightest degree lessen my respect and kind feelings for him, nor for my worthy friend from Maine, (Mr. BRADBURY), who usually takes the same side, and between whom and myself, owing to a misapprehension on my part, a personal rivalry has arisen. (Mr. Dawson.) When this bill was discussed, there was an unpleasant altercation, which, however, passed off with the occasion, leaving us the same good friends we have ever been.

At the last session the senator from Georgia pronounced most unmercifully, not only upon the alternate section bill, but upon the efforts of the senator from Illinois, giving protection to our western emigrants, and their perilous journey to California and Oregon. That bill was then slain, because, as was alleged, it made a large increase to our standing army. This one is to be defeated for the same reason. (Mr. Dawson.) Each of our senators from Georgia made against the Pacific railroad singularly reminded me of my happy effort against the Illinois Central Railroad bill. That road was six hundred miles in length, and there were no estimates or surveys before it, or any kind of plan, notwithstanding that senator's opposition, the bill became a law.